

How can Pakistan tackle the challenge of its youth bulge?

Introduction: Pakistan's burgeoning youth bulge, while an asset, presents a myriad of challenges, and opportunities. In order to efficiently tackle these challenges and harness full potential of the opportunities it presents following steps can be taken

a- Focus on vocational training
The provision of vocational education is essential in order to utilize the potential of youngsters. It increases their skill set and prepares them for entering job market. In this regard, the example of Germany is worth mentioning that incorporates workplace learning into classroom education. Pakistan can adopt this policy as well to better utilize the capabilities on its younger population

b- Promoting startup culture
Another way for Pakistan to reap benefit of

its youth bulge is by promoting start up culture. Another country that utilized its young population in positive manner through promotion of startups is India. Through its Startup India initiative in 2016, it provided technology access, incubator space and access to venture capital to aspiring entrepreneurs with brilliant ideas. The programs like 'Shark Tank India' also boosted the interest of public towards startup culture. Pakistan can take a leaf out of its neighbour's book too when it comes to promoting start ups. The rise in number of unicorn start ups like Zomato and Boat are evidence of success of such policies.

C- Assisting the growth of SMEs.

Another way of tackling the challenge of youth bulge for government of Pakistan is to assist the

Small and medium scale enterprises. Government can do that by removing bureaucratic hurdles, providing access to financial loans on easier terms and access to technology and international investors. One of the key reasons of Bangladesh's economy's stability is their support for SMEs. Grameen Bank gave loans to rural youth of Bangladesh through its microfinance initiatives. It resulted in contribution to overall economic growth of Bangladesh. Pakistan can adopt similar policies to stimulate its economic growth by putting its youth bulge to good work.

e- facilitating partnerships between industries and universities.

One of the major reasons of unemployment in youth is the that uncompetibility of university curriculums and demand of the job market.

example

National Training Package is an Australian initiative, which keeps the tracks of ever evolving demands of industry and incorporates them in the curriculum and training of students studying in universities.

Such collaborations are also required in Pakistan in order for universities to keep up with demands of market.

f- Creation of jobs in diversified fields

With the advancement of science and technology, new disciplines are getting prominence i.e. Artificial intelligence, Climate green industry etc. Government should keep up with changing times and take initiatives that create jobs for youth in diversified disciplines.

g- Address the gender disparities in job market.

Women constitutes

half of population in Pakistan, However, only 23.31% females make up the total contribution to labour force. In it according to World Bank report published in 2022. Government should work on the underlying social and cultural reason by raising awareness and coming up with policies that make work places safer for women.

h- Empower youth through provision of political opportunities

It is the youth of today that will be the leaders of tomorrow. This is why government should provide the avenues to its youth where they can learn and train to be better political leaders.

example

Youth Parliament in Brazil provides the opportunity of expressing their political opinion to youth of Brazil.

Meanwhile even the

organisations are banned in Pakistan at university level. One way of positively using its youth bulge for Pakistan is to make them politically strong.

I- Focus on sports and cultural activities

In order to make the youth spend their time in healthy activities, government should focus on promoting sports and cultural activities. It will not only empower youth and provide them with a platform to showcase their talent but also boost softpower of Pakistan when they will represent and win at international competitions.

J- Focus on health and well being of youth:

According to a World Bank report Human Development ^{Capital} ~~ment~~ index of Pakistan is 0.41. It means an average Pakistani can take benefit from 41% of its potential. A major reason

of this low productivity is poor health services provided by the government. Pakistan should invest more in health care sector in order for its youth to reach their full potential.

K- Population control and family planning

Last but not least, Pakistan should educate its youth about family planning in order to control the population growth rate which is at staggering 2.55% according to census of 2023. After having control over the size of their family, youth of Pakistan will be able to better focus on their career planning.

Critical Analysis

In order to effectively implement these policies Pakistan needs a stable political environment. It will not only allow the political leader to implement long term policy

measures required to positively use the youth bulge but, also stabilize the economy of Pakistan. This will create the much needed fiscal space required to implement such policies. Political stability will also increase the interest of foreign investors in the huge market of Pakistan which is full of young people. More investment will result in more job opportunities for youth and Pakistan will be put on a sustainable path of progress.

Conclusion

The youth bulge of Pakistan, while being of immense potential, presents a set of challenges. By focusing on economic, social and political empowerment of youngsters, Pakistan can put herself on the path of sustainable growth.